

**Human Services Committee
March 12, 2015
Senate Bill 1044 – Support**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is rJo Winch. I am a home-based child care provider in Hartford and a leader in the Family Child Care Union, CSEA SEIU Local 2001. Most of the families that come to me for child care are employed by the large corporations on which Senate Bill 1044 would levy a fee. Unfortunately these parents could not afford to take time off from their low-paying jobs to come here today, so I will say a few words on their behalf, in the name of their children and for all child care workers who are themselves underpaid.

Big box stores and large food chain restaurants have been reaping the benefits of government programs far more than poor families. Their profit margins are higher now than before the recession; yet, wages for their employees have remained the same. It's high time the largest companies in Connecticut started paying their fair share.

Hartford is chock full of people who work tough service jobs in retail and fast food to provide for their children. They come to people like me for child care, after applying for the subsidy program called Care 4 Kids. Most of them qualify for the subsidy, even though they may be working two or three jobs that span 60 to 80 hours per week!

As a child care provider, I pay the subsidy twice – once by paying taxes, and the second time through my own low wages. You see, child care, early education or whatever you want to call it, is not an industry that can rely on market forces to make adjustments. Why? Because even middle class families can't afford to pay the true cost of care that is safe, responsive to children's emotional needs, educational, and accessible during a mom's work times that can vary from day to day, week to week and weekend to weekend. You are the Human Services Committee, you know children need stability.

With women in the workforce not earning enough to get by, we must ensure that they have access to good quality child care at whatever time the boss wants them to report to work. But that takes money, and the state doesn't have it. Corporations do. Just ask their shareholders.

While I believe in the free market system – in fact I fought for America as a former Marine – it is not right that corporations make millions off the blood, sweat and yes, tears, of underpaid workers and contribute little or nothing to ensure that the children of their employees receive good child care.

These bad business practices are bad for our country. Corporations need to step up to the plate either by raising wages SIGNIFICANTLY or paying a fee so government can develop the best child care system in the industrialized world. SB1044 would dedicate monies to child care and help correct both access issues and wage issues in the child care industry. Please vote yes on SB 1044.

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